

Introduction

The Richmond Regional Planning District is in the center of Virginia's urban crescent, which stretches from Northern Virginia to the Hampton Roads Metropolitan Area. Composed of a mix of urban and rural jurisdictions, the area is experiencing rapid growth. Region 15 region consists of Charles City, Chesterfield, Hanover, Henrico, Goochland, New Kent and Powhatan counties, the city of Richmond and the town of Ashland.

Separated by the fall line and straddling two physiographic regions — the Coastal Plain to the east and the Piedmont to the west — this region offers a variety of terrain and habitats. The Piedmont is characterized by rolling hills, meandering rivers and a mixture of residential and working lands. The Coastal Plain is flat with tidal rivers and streams as well as tidal and some non-tidal wetlands.

Seven rivers flow through the area including the James, Appomattox, Chickahominy, South Anna, North Anna, Pamunkey and Little. All offer opportunities for recreation and provide a variety of habitats. Of these, the James is the largest, and it offers diverse recreation, especially at the Falls of the James in Richmond. This section of the river provides swift flowing white-water conditions supporting canoeing, kayaking and rafting activities. Other popular water-related activities include bank fishing, wading and boat angling, tubing, wading and swimming, rock-hopping, and nature walks and hiking.

Federal, state and local park and open space resources are found in the region. Federal properties include 13 units of the Richmond National Battlefield Park, the Maggie Walker Historical Site, Presquile National Wildlife Refuge and Harrison Lake National Fish Hatchery. State-owned resources include Pocahontas State Park, the newly acquired Powhatan State Park, and wildlife management areas at Game Farm Marsh and on the Powhatan and Chickahominy rivers. In addition, there are a number of locally owned resources and sites of regional importance.

The region continues to experience rapid growth. In 2000, the population was 865,941. By 2005, population had increased to 925,800, an increase of 6.9 percent. The region's population grew 7.9 percent from April of 2005 to July of 2006, adding another 86,166 people. Future growth in the overall area is expected to be rapid. Population is projected to increase 27.2

percent to 1,101,400 in 2020. Chesterfield, Henrico and Hanover counties are among the fastest growing in the state by numeric growth, with residents having increased by 26,600, 21,000 and 8,800, respectively, from 2000-2005. New Kent, Powhatan and Goochland counties are also among the fastest growing in the state, with growth rates of 16.3 percent, 15.2 percent and 14.2 percent, respectively, over the same period. Region 15 is home to three of the top 10 Virginia cities and counties when measured by 2005 population. Chesterfield is ranked fourth, Henrico County is ranked fifth and the City of Richmond is ranked tenth.

Area growth has occurred mainly in western Henrico County, southern Hanover County, and northern and western Chesterfield County. Recently, there has been development within the urban core along the James River in Richmond. Significant future growth is anticipated to extend southwesterly through Chesterfield County along the Interstate-288 corridor, north along the I-95 corridor in Hanover, and along the I-64 and I-295 corridors through Goochland, Hanover, Henrico, New Kent and Charles City counties.

With the large numbers of people, urbanization and development in this region, there is a need to protect critical open space and provide more recreational opportunities. Actions should be encouraged that enhance the scenic qualities of the region's river and scenic road corridors, create greenways, develop parks and protect important natural areas, forests and farmland. This in turn will enhance the quality of life in the region.

Because Region 15 is predominantly urban, consideration should be given to urban issues with regard to parks and recreational opportunities. Planning for the urban population should include the needs of those who may have limited means of transportation. The major state and regional park systems that offer large areas of open space and natural area experiences are not typically in urban settings. Thus greenways, urban open spaces and stream valleys can be re-established in neglected areas to meet some of the demand for natural and passive areas in urban settings.

Recommendations applicable to all regions are found in chapters III through IX. To meet needs established in the 2007 *Virginia Outdoors Plan (VOP)*, it is important to integrate these recommendations with those that follow for Region 15 into regional and local planning and development strategies.

Outdoor recreation

For a general discussion of outdoor recreation trends, issues and planning considerations in Virginia, see Chapter II: Outdoor Recreation Issues, Trends and Survey Findings, and Chapter VII: Outdoor Recreation Planning and Related Issues.

Public participation in recreation is high and the 2006 *Virginia Outdoors Survey* (VOS) recorded high demand for most activities. The needs analysis shows demand is high in the area for activities such as walking, bicycling, playground use, soccer fields and water-related recreation opportunities such as swimming and boating (See Table 15).

All localities in Region 15 are served by a parks and recreation department. According to the Commonwealth of Virginia Auditor of Public Accounts, *Comparative Report on Local Government Revenues and Expenditures* (year ended June 30, 2005), per capita spending on parks and recreation for each locality in this region was: Charles City, \$47.28; Chesterfield, \$25.19; Hanover, \$27.50; Henrico, \$49.56; Goochland, \$19.55; New Kent, \$18.09; Powhatan, \$4.71; the City of Richmond, \$35.88; and the town of Ashland, \$12.50. This compares to a statewide per capita spending on parks and recreation of \$55.31, including \$85.51 from towns, \$43.75 from counties and \$76.45 from cities.

Land conservation

A detailed discussion on statewide awareness of the need for conservation of farmland, parks, natural areas, and historical and cultural resources is found in Chapter III: Land Conservation. Conservation lands in the region are shown Map X-30.

Land Trusts Operating in Region 15:

- APVA Preservation Virginia
- Capital Region Land Conservancy
- Chesapeake Bay Foundation
- Civil War Preservation Trust
- Friends of Chesterfield's Riverfront
- Friends of Virginia's Rivers
- Historic Polegreen Church Foundation
- James River Association
- National Park Trust
- Scenic Virginia
- The Conservation Fund
- The 500-Year Forest Foundation
- The Nature Conservancy
- Trust for Public Land
- Williamsburg Land Conservancy
- Virginia Department of Historic Resources
- Virginia Outdoors Foundation

Land conservation recommendations include:

- Use conservation measures to buffer existing historical properties and set aside additional properties that are currently unprotected.

Green infrastructure

Information about green infrastructure is found in Chapter IV: Green Infrastructure. Regional recommendations for green infrastructure include:

- Local and regional agencies should become informed and educate constituents about green infrastructure planning, including guidance on local zoning initiatives for changing community design and transportation systems.
- Efforts should be initiated for a regional green infrastructure plan and to promote the value of this planning model.
- The Chesterfield County Committee on the Future prepared a report in 2005 titled *Green Infrastructure: Protecting Resources for Future Generations*. The report documents the growing concern for the loss of open space, natural resources and historical sites. It also provides recommendations and related strategies for protecting these resources through the use of a green infrastructure plan. Chesterfield County should work to implement the recommendations in this report.

Programs

The following recommendations integrate statewide program initiatives into responsive regional strategies for outdoor recreation and conservation. The statewide program areas addressed in this section include: trails and greenways, blueways and water access, historic and landscape resources, scenic resources, Scenic Highways and Virginia Byways, scenic rivers, watersheds, environmental and land stewardship education, and the private sector. Recommendations are bulleted or numbered and are not sequenced by state or local priorities. Numbered recommendations are site specific to the regional map at the end of this section (see Map X-31).

Trails and greenways

For more detailed information, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Recreation Programs and Initiatives, Greenways and Trails.

Statewide trunkline trails

- Develop a master plan for statewide trunkline trails through the Richmond Region.

1 The **East Coast Greenway**, proposed to span almost 3,000 miles from Maine to Florida, aims to connect all the major cities of the East Coast along a continuous, off-road path. This trail will make use of waterfront esplanades, canal paths, railroad corridors and park paths for cyclists, hikers, skaters, equestrians and people with disabilities as it connects urban, suburban and rural America. The East Coast Greenway has a “close the gaps” strategy of connecting existing trails, parks, neighborhoods and historic sites. Potential connections for the East Coast Greenway which should be evaluated and implemented in this region by local, regional and state agencies and organizations include:

- the proposed Cannon Run Natural Area connecting residents in Highland Park to the James River.
- the proposed Southside Richmond Rail to Trail (on abandoned CSX Railway property) connecting Maury Street Park to Westover Hills Community Center.
- the proposed South Bank Linear Park along the James River from Ancarrow's Landing to the Port of Richmond.
- the proposed Falling Creek Linear Park in Chesterfield County.
- the proposed James River Historic Trail in Chesterfield County.
- the partially built Historic Seaboard Airline Railroad Rail to Trail (now abandoned CSX Railway property) connecting eastern Chesterfield County to Colonial Heights and Petersburg. This trail could provide needed recreational and training facilities for new staff deployed at Fort Lee. The National Park Service's Rivers Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA) is providing consultation assistance to the Chester Linear Pathway Scoping Project.

2 The **James River Heritage Trail** is proposed to follow America's Founding River from the Chesapeake Bay to the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains. The trail parallels the old Kanawha Canal towpath, and it follows park trails, scenic riverside roadways and urban riverfront trails deep into the heart of Virginia. The trail segments that should be evaluated and implemented in this region by local, regional and state agencies and organizations include:

- The Virginia Capital Trail along Route 5, a 52-mile trail linking resources between the current Capital of Virginia (Richmond) with the Colonial Capital of Virginia (Williamsburg). The trail, which has been approved by all local jurisdictions, should be constructed in a manner that preserves the historic and scenic beauty of its unique tree corridor. RTCA is

partnering with the Virginia Capital Trail Foundation for trail corridor planning, signage, amenities and interpretive planning to coordinate with local, state and national initiatives.

- The Richmond Canal and Riverfront, including the proposed “Legacy Project,” to extend the Canal Walk from 17th and Cary Streets to the Great Shiplock Park.
- Trails through the James River Park system in Richmond.

Other trails

3 Local and regional agencies and organizations should implement recommendations for the **Lower Appomattox River Trail and Greenway** and research cooperative regional management and operation alternatives for this resource that traverses more than 400 acres in five jurisdictions. When completed, the system will consist of bicycle and multi-purpose trails linking natural and cultural heritage sites and other linear open spaces in the region between Lake Chesdin and the City Point area in Hopewell. The goal of this 22-mile trail network is to link all recreational, cultural and natural features, and historic sites on both sides of the Appomattox River. A portion of the greenway is under development along Virginia State University property westward from Ettrick. Another portion eastward from the Brasfield Dam is also planned. Across the river, work is also underway in Petersburg (see Region 19 for more information).

4 The City of Richmond should expand **Oregon Hill Linear Park** to provide bicycle and pedestrian access from Monroe Park and Virginia Commonwealth University to the James River.

5 Local and regional agencies and organizations should complete **The Slave Trail** in Richmond connecting Ancarrow's Landing to the Lumpkins Jail archeological site as part of the African American Heritage Trails. Reconciliation Park at 15th and Main streets should be incorporated into the Slave Trail project. This trail should be evaluated for its potential to become part of the East Coast Greenway and the James River Heritage Trail.

6 Local and regional agencies and organizations should connect **Pocahontas State Park to the Government Center Trail** in Chesterfield.

7 Local and regional agencies and organizations should develop **walking-bicycle trails along Michaux Creek** and the Courthouse Village Service areas in Powhatan.

8 Local and regional agencies and organizations should expand the **Wahrani Nature Trails** in New Kent County to allow for mixed use by mountain bicyclists, walkers and joggers.

Water access

Blueways and water access are critical in a water rich state such as Virginia. The Richmond region is blessed with water resources offering a variety of recreation experiences. Boasting a blueway with Class IV and V rapids through the heart of downtown Richmond, James River Park was named Best Urban Park in the Readers' Choice Awards sponsored by Blue Ridge Outdoors magazine for two consecutive years. The lower Pamunkey River was recognized along with the Mattaponi as an American Canoe Association's Recognized Water Trail in 2006. Established by the Mattaponi and Pamunkey Rivers Association, the water trail along these two tributaries of Virginia's York River features some of the last remaining pristine fresh water paddling on the Atlantic seaboard. A discussion of the water access in the Commonwealth can be found in Chapter VII: Outdoor Programs and Initiatives, Water Access and Blueways. Water access recommendations include:

- Regional and local agencies should establish cooperative agreements among localities, other agencies and private landowners to meet the increasing need for public access to recreational waters.
 - Regional and local agencies should identify strategies to make additional waterfront resources available for public use.
 - Regional and local agencies should provide adequate support facilities and services, such as restrooms, concessions, parking and maintenance for existing and proposed public water and beach access areas.
 - Regional and local agencies should acquire or maintain access to existing public beaches and water access sites that may be jeopardized by changes in land use or development activities.
 - The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and local government should expand public access to water by developing parking and launch facilities at bridge crossings.
- 9** The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) should provide fishing access for people with physical challenges. Developments at **Lake Harrison National Fish Hatchery** provide access for people with disabilities.

10 The Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) and Henrico County should provide fishing access for persons with disabilities at the **Osborne Boat Landing**.

11 State, regional and local agencies and organizations should develop a public boat ramp at **Lawrence Lewis Jr. Park** in Charles City County. The county has accepted all the terms and conditions from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as described by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

12 Chesterfield County and DGIF should renovate and expand the **Dutch Gap Boat landing** on the James River in Chesterfield County. The site frequently is at full capacity, and the launch area should be relocated away from commercial shipping lanes. Chesterfield and DGIF should also evaluate opportunities for a public powerboat launch in the vicinity of the James River and Falling Creek.

13 Chesterfield County and DGIF should evaluate access to the **Appomattox River in eastern Chesterfield County**. Additional whitewater canoe access points should be established on the Appomattox River between the Brasfield Dam at Lake Chesdin and the Harvell Dam just beyond Virginia State University.

14 State and local agencies should provide additional access on the **Appomattox River at the Route 360 crossing** in western Chesterfield County.

15 State and local agencies should provide additional access on the **Appomattox River** at the River Road crossing in western Chesterfield County.

16 New Kent County and DGIF should evaluate the feasibility of a **public boat ramp at Big Creek** on the Pamunkey River. This site includes several hundred acres of natural waterways, swamps and marshlands, which provide considerable opportunity for water-oriented recreational pursuits.

17 State and local agencies should provide public access along the **Pamunkey River at the Route 360 crossing**.

18 State and local agencies should provide public access along the **Pamunkey River below the Route 301 bridge**.

19 State and local agencies should provide public access along the **Chickahominy River near Game Farm Marsh**.

20 State and local agencies should provide public access along the **North Anna River below Lake Anna Dam**.

21 State and local agencies should provide public access along the **South Anna River at Route 1**.

Historic and landscape resources

Consideration should be given to evaluating potential historic and landscape recommendations in this region. For more detailed information, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Programs and Initiatives, Historic and Landscape Resources. Local and regional recommendations include:

- Regional and local agencies should identify historic and archaeological resources that can be used for tourism, recreation and education. These resources should be included in local land use planning and decision-making processes to promote preservation and protection.
- Regional and local agencies should build partnerships with local historic attractions, historical societies, museums and other tourism organizations in the region to include the Virginia Association of Museums, Virginia Civil War Trails, APVA Preservation Virginia, the Virginia Main Street Program and others to enhance local heritage tourism, educational and recreational offerings.
- Regional and local agencies should encourage local governments and private organizations that own historic properties in the region to manage properties effectively for long-term protection and to maximize public benefit consistent with the nature of the historic property.
- Regional and local agencies should recognize the multiple historic and cultural resources within the rural landscape through rural historic districts.
- Regional and local agencies should support the creation of other heritage area programs to promote tourism and preservation in distinctive regions.
- Local government and local and regional organizations should work with the state to meet the critical need for a countywide survey of the historic and architectural resources of New Kent County.

22 Chesterfield County should implement the proposed expansion of the **Eppington Plantation** site to preserve the site's historical landscape and provide public access to the Appomattox River.

23 Chesterfield County and the Henricus Foundation should continue making improvements to the **Citie of Henricus**, the second successful English settlement in America.

24 Chesterfield County should implement development plans at **Mid-Lothian Coal Mines**, an early mining and railroad site in Chesterfield County.

25 Archeological remnants of the **Falling Creek Ironworks**, a 1619 early industrial site in Chesterfield County, have recently been uncovered. Local, regional and state agencies and organizations should preserve the site's historical and natural features and consider appropriate development to allow for interpretation and tourism.

26 Henrico and Goochland counties should evaluate the old canal locks and railroad embankment to include the **Gayton Coal Mines** and other historic interests. In addition, the heavily wooded swamps and ravines along Tuckahoe Creek could provide a natural setting for outdoor recreational and ecological study.

27 A bill to amend the National Trails System Act to designate the **Washington-Rochambeau Route** as a National Historic Trail was introduced in both houses of Congress in July 2006 and is currently in committee. This 600-mile route was followed by the American and French armies in 1781 and 1782 under George Washington and the Comte de Rochambeau as they traveled to, and returned from, the siege and victory at Yorktown. This route, which passes by Hanover Courthouse and through New Kent County en route to Yorktown, has also been designated as a special highway by the state. The state and local agencies should sign this designated route and evaluate road segments for scenic character and future protection for the scenic integrity of the route.

28 Legislation was passed to designate **The Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail** as the nation's first national historic water trail. County commissioners, mayors, businesses, tourism agencies and nonprofit organizations should continue to develop and promote this trail along the James, Chickahominy, Mattaponi, Pamunkey and York rivers to promote stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay.

29 In 1988, the General Assembly officially designated the **James River Batteau Festival Trail** from Lynchburg to the City of Richmond. Localities along the route should work towards conservation and rehabilitation of remaining navigational structures from the days of the batteau. Boshers Dam and the current

condition of the James River and Kanawha Canal within Richmond prevents canal boats and batteaus from passing through downtown and into the tidal portion of the James River. The annual James River Batteau Festival and other significant tourist attractions would benefit from the availability of a functional canal and navigation system around the dams and falls at the city.

30 Route 1 is an historic highway, and there are many nationally significant sites along it, including Drewry's Bluff, Dutch Gap, the Citie of Henricus and Falling Creek Ironworks. This route should be marketed as "**Historic Route One**" in a coordinated effort between historical interest groups and adjacent landowners making scenic improvements along the corridor.

31 New Kent County should continue working on an **Eltham Battlefield** project in eastern New Kent County. The proposed project will connect battlefields in Eltham to an existing trail system and allow for preservation of historic resources and interpretation of historic events for visitors.

Scenic resources

Consideration should be given to potential scenic recommendations in this region. For more detailed information, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Programs and Initiatives, Scenic Resources. Local and regional recommendations include:

- Regional and local agencies should develop corridor management plans for scenic byways, blueways, greenways and scenic rivers to assure preservation of the scenic quality of the corridor.
- Regional and local agencies should protect the scenic value of lands adjacent to publicly owned properties, as well as the scenic value of working agricultural and forestal areas key to maintaining a sense of place and economic vitality of the region. Scenic attributes to be considered include:
 - Consider timber harvesting impacts on key viewsheds.
 - Protect viewsheds along river corridors and scenic byways.
 - Create scenic overlooks and vista cuts along Virginia byways and scenic highways to enhance the visual experience of traveling.
- Regional and local agencies and organizations should assess scenic assets for this region to determine appropriate protection strategies.

32 The City of Richmond and local, regional and state organizations should preserve historic viewsheds along the James River throughout the region and especially the **viewshed from Libby Hill**, which mirrors the view to the Thames in Richmond, England and resulted in the naming of Richmond, Virginia.

Scenic highways and Virginia byways

Opportunities to traverse Virginia's scenic and cultural landscapes are enhanced through nationally recognized designation. For more detailed information, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Programs and Initiatives, Scenic Highways and Virginia Byways.

Scenic roads recommendations for the region include:

- Regional and local agencies should recognize and nominate scenic roads for designation as Virginia byways.
- Regional and local agencies should partner with other state, local and professional organizations to develop corridor management plans to protect the scenic assets of byway corridors.
- Regional and local agencies should incorporate Virginia byways and scenic highways into local comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances to ensure viewsheds are conserved and the sense of place retained along these corridors.
- Regional and local agencies should support designation of nationally qualified historic corridors to increase civic engagement and foster heritage tourism.
- Local governments should develop and adopt comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances to ensure that the scenic resources along roadways are protected.
- Localities should take steps to beautify and protect scenic quality to include measures like Powhatan County has implemented in adding plantings to designated byways.

The following road segments are potential Virginia Byways and should be evaluated to determine if they qualify for designation:

33 **Route 605** in Hanover County.

34 **Route 249 and Route 60** in western New Kent County and eastern Henrico County.

35 **Route 604** in Chesterfield, Powhatan and Amelia counties.

36 **Route 522** in Northern Powhatan County.

Scenic rivers

Portions of the James, Appomattox and Chickahominy rivers have been designated state scenic rivers. The James was the first Virginia river to receive some type of official recognition. In 1972, the City of Richmond secured designation of a portion of the James within the city as a historic river by the Virginia General Assembly. In 1984, the designation was extended through downtown Richmond; a formal declaration as a state scenic river followed. This eight-mile section is named the Historic Falls of the James Scenic River and extends from the western city limits of Richmond to Orleans Street. The lower James River is designated a state historic river for 1.2 miles from Trees Point in Charles City County to Lawnes Creek at the Isle of Wight and Surry County lines.

Approximately five miles of the Appomattox River below Lake Chesdin was designated a state Scenic River in 1977. The Appomattox River designation was extended 1.2 miles to 100 feet from the base of the Lake Chesdin Dam by the 1998 Virginia General Assembly. In 1990, an approximate 10-mile section of the Chickahominy River, from Route 360 to the junction of the Hanover-Henrico-New Kent county line in Hanover County, was designated a state scenic river.

For detailed information about the Virginia's Scenic Rivers Program and its purpose, benefits and designation process, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Recreation Programs and Initiative, Scenic Rivers. Regional and local recommendations include:

- Regional and local agencies and organizations should develop a management plan for the James, Appomattox and Chickahominy rivers to protect the scenic quality of these river corridors.

The following river segments qualify for designation as Virginia Scenic Rivers:

37 The **Chickahominy River** at the New Kent, Henrico and Charles City County line to the Route 618 Bridge.

38 The **James River** from Orleans Street to Surry County.

39 The **North Anna River** from Route 738 to Route 1 at Chandler Crossing.

40 The **James River** from Wingina to Maidens Landing.

41 The **South Anna River** from Route 673 to Route 686.

42 The **Pamunkey River** from Route 614 to Pampatike Landing.

The following river segments are potential Virginia Scenic Rivers and should be evaluated to determine suitability for designation:

43 The **South Anna River** from Lake Gordonsville to Route 673.

44 The **South Anna River** from Route 678 to the confluence with the Pamunkey River.

45 The **Chickahominy River** from Route 618 to the James River.

46 The **Pamunkey River** in its entirety.

47 The **North Anna River** from Lake Anna to Route 738 (Anderson Bridge)

48 The **North Anna River** from Route 1 at Chandler Crossing to the confluence with the Pamunkey River.

49 The **James River** from Maidens Landing to Watkins Landing.

Watershed resources

This region is within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed and drains to the James and rivers. For information about Virginia's watershed programs, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Programs and Initiatives, Virginia's Watershed Programs. Watershed recommendations for this region include:

- Joint meetings of decisionmakers should continue in the Crater and Richmond planning district commissions to work toward green infrastructure planning across the watersheds in both regions.
- Regional coordination and partnerships should be continued through the Middle James Roundtable and other watershed groups.

Watershed groups in Region 15

- Chickahominy Watershed Alliance
- Falls of the James Scenic River Advisory Council
- Friends of Chesterfield's Riverfront
- Friends of the Lower Appomattox River
- Friends of the Rivers of Virginia
- James River Association
- James River Advisory Council
- Middle James Roundtable
- Virginia Conservation Network
- Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay
- The Chesapeake Bay Foundation.

Environmental and land stewardship education

Outdoor environmental education centers and programs are available throughout the region and include Rockwood Park and Pocahontas State Park in Chesterfield County, the Reedy Creek Nature Center in Richmond, and Three Lakes Park in Henrico County. Other outdoor environmental opportunities include Virginia Commonwealth University's Inger and Walter Rice Center for Environmental Life Sciences, a field station devoted to a broad array of environmental research, teaching and public service. The Robins Nature and Visitor Center at Maymont also leads a variety of educational programs, behind-the-scenes tours, night hikes and many other public programs about Virginia's native species, habitats and landscapes.

For detailed information on environmental and land stewardship education, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Programs and Initiatives, Environmental and Land Stewardship Education. Environmental and land stewardship recommendations for this region include:

- The Richmond Greater Richmond Environmental Education Network (GREEN) committee coordinated by Virginia Naturally should expand to help maximize the use of outdoor education facilities.

50 The **New Kent Forestry Center** should consider the feasibility of an environmental education center.

Federal programs

For information on federal programs affecting Virginia's outdoor recreation and conservation opportunities, see Chapter IX-A: Resource Agencies. Local and regional recommendations are listed by agency.

National parks

- Local and regional government, user groups and nonprofits should work with the National Park Service (NPS) to revise policy in order to allow mountain bikes to use appropriate national park trails.
- NPS, with local and regional agencies, should continue coordination and partnerships involving the Maggie L. Walker National Historic Site; the Richmond National Battlefield Park, which encompasses Beaver Dam Creek, Gaines' Mill, Glendale (Frayser's Farm) and Malvern Hill; a portion of the 1864 Overland Campaign including Totopotomoy Creek and Cold Harbor; naval action at Drewry's Bluff; and actions along the Richmond-Petersburg front encompassing Fort Harrison, New Market Heights, Deep Bottom and Parker's Battery. Other NPS sites to be involved in community outreach and partnership may include Hanover's Rural Plains, the Civil War Visitor Center at Tredegar Iron Works and the Chimborazo visitor center and museum on Richmond's east side.
- Local, regional and state agencies and organizations should continue collaborative efforts through the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Water Trails Program to connect people to heritage, outdoor recreation and educational opportunities and resources. The National Park Service coordinates the Chesapeake Bay Gateway program (www.baygateways.net) that promotes historic and environmental focus on water access. As of April 2006, Gateway sites in Region 15 are Lawrence Lewis Jr. Park in Charles City County, Dutch Gap, the Lower James River Water Trail and Captain John Smith's Adventures on the James River.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

51 The **Harrison Lake National Fish Hatchery** should be sufficiently funded to remain in operation in order to maintain its important function in restoring anadromous fish to the Chesapeake Bay and its rivers as well as to provide public recreation opportunities.

52 The USFWS should continue to work with partners, including the U.S. Coast Guard and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer, to provide safe public access to the refuge for compatible public use, including wildlife observation and deer hunting as funding allows.

Presquile National Wildlife Refuge has been put into "preservation status" due to decreased funding for manpower and projects. Details of preservation strategies are being developed for this refuge. There is more information on this at <http://www.fws.gov/refuges/profiles/index.cfm?id=51623>

State facilities and programs

For a discussion of state facilities and programs throughout the entire Commonwealth, see Chapter IX-B: Resource Agencies. Local and regional recommendations are listed by agency or program.

State parks

53 **Pocahontas State Park** (7,919 acres) is located in Chesterfield County. Built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), this was the first recreational park in the Richmond-Petersburg-Hopewell area. The NPS donated the facility to Virginia State Parks in 1946, making it the largest Virginia state park. Traditional offerings of the park include a 129-site, full-service campground; picnicking and seven picnic shelters; an aquatic recreation center; more than 50 miles of trail and forest roads for hiking, biking, bridle or multiuse; nature and cultural interpretive and educational programs; fishing on Swift Creek and Beaver Lakes; and paddling on Swift Creek Lake. The park's CCC Museum is located in an original CCC building and highlights the accomplishments of the CCC across the state. The park also has the Heritage Amphitheater, an outdoor venue that accommodates concerts, stage performances and other large gatherings of up to 4,000 people. The Heritage Center is a meeting facility adjacent to the amphitheater and houses the park's nature center. Also, available are Algonquian Ecology Camp and Swift Creek Camp that offer two to four cabin groups and an activity-dining hall with kitchen.

Funding from the 2002 General Obligation Bond (GOB) was allocated to expand the campground and construct camping cabins, to improve roads and parking, and to construct an equestrian center. The park has also been able to use GOB funds to improve existing trails.

Opportunities could exist for Pocahontas to be connected to the East Coast Greenway, and efforts should be made to link the park to the Chesterfield County Government Center Trail. Cooperative programming with the county should continue as they relate to programs offered at the state park amphitheater.

54 **Powhatan State Park on the Historic James River** (1,564 acres), located in Powhatan County, is a new park created by the General Assembly in 2003 by a land transfer from the Beaumont Juvenile Correction Center to the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). The park has two miles of frontage on the James River, providing public access for boating and fishing. The park's completed master plan calls for the development of a traditional state park.

The first phase of the master plan calls for the development of multi-use trails, picnicking, river access for boating and fishing, canoe-in primitive camping, roads and support facilities. At full build out, the park will provide a full service campground, an equestrian campground, cabins, a visitor education center, additional picnicking facilities and river access. Funding is needed for development as well as operational and staffing costs.

The need exists for additional parkland and water access in this region of the state; potential acquisitions should be explored as follows:

55 In the vicinity of the confluence of the **North and South Anna rivers**.

56 Along the **Pamunkey River in Hanover County**.

57 Along the **James River east of Richmond**.

State fish and wildlife management areas (WMA)

The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) operates three WMAs for public use in the region. Kittiewan Wildlife Preserve is not open to the public.

- DGIF should continue to investigate opportunities to acquire in-holdings in their WMAs and to improve each area with trails and other structures for wildlife viewing and other outdoor recreation.
- DGIF should also acquire additional lands wherever feasible to provide additional access for public hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing recreation.
- DGIF should continue to work with local and regional governments to support the Birding and Wildlife trails program.

58 More than 5,000 acres have been acquired at the **Chickahominy WMA** in Charles City County. DGIF should consider expanding recreational opportunities, particularly along the Morris Creek portion of the property. An additional 103.5 acres acquired across from **Game Farm Marsh** off Chickahominy Lake in New Kent County will enable the DGIF to offer more opportunities for waterfowl hunting, fishing, boating and wildlife viewing.

59 DGIF should evaluate opportunities for increased water-oriented recreation at the **Powhatan WMA** in Powhatan County. Resources include the two lakes within the area and Appomattox River frontage.

State forests

- Local and regional agencies should encourage the use of Department of Forestry (DOF) Best Management Practices in floodplain forest areas, particularly those adjacent to state-designated scenic waterways.
- Local and regional agencies should use DOF properties as field classrooms to help with educational programs.
- Local and regional agencies should coordinate with DOF and seek the assistance of local trail and river user organizations to develop forest trails and publish maps for each state forest, as well as establish greenways and blueways for public use.
- Local and regional agencies should investigate opportunities to acquire fee simple ownership or easements to conserve working farms and forests in the region.
- Local and regional agencies should work with DOF to create defensible space around buildings to reduce the risk of wild fires through the DOF Fire Wise Program.
- Localities should work with DOF on education and monitoring of tree diseases and other pests that could weaken the forested environments.
- Local, state and regional agencies and organizations should target agricultural lands for reforestation to protect the water quality of the area and limit the effects of erosion on these lands.

60 DOF should develop plans for forest-managed hiking trails, canoe launching facilities and a water trail at **Crawford State Forest** in partnership with the New Kent Forestry Center.

State natural area preserves

Cumberland Marsh Natural Area Preserve in New Kent County is the only dedicated natural area within the Richmond Regional Planning District. The DCR has, as of November 2006, documented 266 occurrences of 95 rare species and natural communities in the Richmond Regional Planning District. Twenty-four species are globally rare and six are federally threatened or endangered. One hundred seventeen conservation sites have been identified in the district. Of these, only 29 sites (25 percent) have received any level of protection through ownership or management by state, federal and non-government organizations. However, only one site is protected well enough to ensure the long-term viability of the rare species and natural communities it supports.

DCR recommends that all unprotected conservation sites, and all unprotected portions of partially protected sites, be targeted for future land conservation efforts. The appropriate method of protection will vary with each site but may include placing the site on Virginia's Registry of Natural Areas, developing a voluntary management agreement with the landowner, securing a conservation easement through a local land trust, acquiring the site through a locality or local land trust, dedicating the site as a natural area preserve with the current owner, or acquiring the site as a state-owned natural area preserve.

Within Region 15, DCR is particularly interested in protecting:

- Significant communities and rare species habitats along the Chickahominy River.
- Significant communities and rare species habitats along the Pamunkey River.

61 While a portion of the state-owned **Elko Tract** in eastern Henrico County has been transferred to the Henrico County Industrial Development Authority, consideration should be given to utilizing the certain undeveloped portions of the property to help meet natural heritage resource protection and outdoor recreation needs of the region. DCR would like to dedicate a portion of the Elko property south of Portugee Road as a natural area preserve. This area includes White Oak Swamp, which is an area of historical and ecological significance and should be protected. The area contains wetlands rich in rare and native plant and animal species, and is suitable for a variety of open space activities.

Other state lands

For a discussion of other state lands, see Chapter IX-C: Resource Agencies.

The following state-owned lands contain significant undeveloped open space that may have some potential for local recreational use. Each site should be assessed and, where appropriate, a cooperative agreement should be developed to make these resources available for local use as parks and open space.

- All community college properties should be explored to determine if undeveloped portions of those properties could be used to meet the recreation and conservation needs of the region.
- All Virginia Department of Corrections properties should be evaluated for recreation and conservation.

Transportation programs

- Local and regional agencies should develop alternatives to the use of private automobiles for daily activities. Transit systems, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, improved community design, as well as a change in people's attitudes toward transportation alternatives will be needed for the transportation system of the future to meet capacity needs and energy constraints.
- Local and regional agencies should work with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to implement Context Sensitive Solutions that accommodate multiple transportation modes.
- Local and regional agencies should recognize the need for a network of low-speed, low-volume roadways used by equestrians, pedestrians and cyclists, and they should include protections for this network in their comprehensive plan.
- Local and regional agencies should encourage the development of a permanent process for integrating the recommendations of local public health agencies, and they should include "active living" opportunities into all phases of transportation planning, land use planning and project design.
- Localities in the Region 15 should seek guidance from the 2002 Richmond Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.
- Greenways and trails listed in the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's 2026 Long Range Transportation Plan should be considered for designation and development by local, regional and state agencies and organizations.

62 State and local agencies should enhance and maintain signage along the Interstate **Bike Route 1 and Bike Route 76** through the region. When road improvements are made, a bike lane should be added, and facilities for bicyclists should be available along the route.

Local and regional parks and recreation departments

For a discussion of local and regional parks and recreation departments, see Chapter IX-D: Resource Agencies. Local and regional recommendations include:

- Local agencies and organizations should explore reclamation of abandoned landfills into new and needed parks.

- Local governments and agencies should consider cooperative management for the recreational use of private, corporate and state or federally owned lands in order to increase local access and meet outdoor recreation needs.
- Chesterfield County should implement the adopted the 2020 updated Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan and Public Facilities Plan that guides the county's acquisition and development of the park system. Also, the recent bond referendum which allocates more than \$20 million for facility renovation and new construction within the park system should be implemented.
- Henrico County should implement the adopted Update 2015 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan. The plan provides a comprehensive approach to parks and open space planning. The Update 2015 Plan includes a revised parks, recreation and open space classification system to permit a more detailed analysis of resources, protection issues, and parks and recreation facility needs.
- Lands along approximately six miles of the James River through Richmond have been acquired by the city and improved for the public's access and enjoyment. Local, regional and state agencies and organizations should evaluate the extension of the parkland westward through Henrico and Chesterfield counties. This extension would provide valuable open space and recreational opportunities to area residents and help to protect the James River corridor. In addition, the city should place existing park lands in the James River Park and along the river in a conservation easement.
- Local and regional agencies and organizations should consider forming a regional park authority to facilitate management and the expansion of resources needed to best address the parks and natural areas along or in close proximity to the James and Appomattox rivers. Technical assistance for initiating a regional park authority may be requested from the DCR. A source of seed funding would be helpful in generating interest among multi-jurisdictional partners.
- 63** Local and regional agencies should develop a regional park located along the **Chickahominy River** near Providence Forge in Charles City County. This would complement the existing Chickahominy River WMA farther downstream and help to preserve an important natural resource.
- 64** Chesterfield county should develop a passive park along Falling Creek on the 167-acre **Stratton Property** near Chippenham Parkway.

- 65 Chesterfield County should continue development of **Irvin G. Horner Park** on Otterdale Creek for active and passive recreational activities.
- 66 Chesterfield County should continue development of **Lake Chesdin Park** in the southern part of the county that has approximately 200 acres of parkland on the north side of the **Appomattox River**. Development of passive recreational facilities along the lake should be a priority.
- 67 Chesterfield County should implement the master plan for the 262-acre **Brown and Williamson** property to include additional public access, as well as linkages with other parks and access points along the James River.
- 68 Chesterfield County should acquire and develop a **regional park site** in the **Winterpock area** to serve the fast-growing Spring Run community and the southwestern quadrant of the county.
- 69 Chesterfield County should continue development of amenities at **Dutch Gap Conservation Area** to promote conservation, improve boating access, provide bank fishing, and interpret the landscape and natural resources.
- 70 Chesterfield County should develop a **regional park in the Midlothian area**. Land acquisition is critical due to fast growth.
- 71 Hanover County should implement the recently approved master plan for the 221-acre **March Park** providing passive recreation within this natural area.
- 72 Hanover County should evaluate the potential for lands along the scenic **South Anna River** to become a regional park.
- 73 Hanover County should evaluate the potential for land adjacent to the whitewater fall line section of the **Little River** as a regional park.
- 74 Henrico County should evaluate the **Belmont Park-Horse Swamp** for regional recreational development linked by trails.
- 75 Henrico County should implement the recently approved master plan for **Four Mile Creek Park**.
- 76 Henrico County should develop a natural area and park at their 500+-acre site along the **Chickahominy River**.

- 77 New Kent County should implement the adopted Master Plan for Parks and Recreation. The county should also implement a **100-acre site off Crisscross Road** near I-64 as a multi-purpose site including both active recreation and nature study.
- 78 New Kent County should evaluate **Diascund Reservoir** for the development of water-oriented and water-enhanced recreational facilities.
- 79 Powhatan County should develop an **amphitheater in Fighting Creek Park**.
- 80 The City of Richmond, through the Richmond Riverfront Development Corporation, should proceed with the development of the **James River and Kanawha Canal** system through the area. The project provides the opportunity for people to enjoy a renovated canal system. Walking trails, boat rides providing access to historic areas and other amenities are included in the project. The NPS has relocated its Richmond Battlefield Park Headquarters to the Tredegar Iron Works complex, which is adjacent to the canal.
- 81 The City of Richmond should expand the public park system to create a continuous public space linkage between many of the historic spaces in the city's east end including Chimborazo Park, Libby Hill Park, Jefferson Park, Great Shiplock Park and the canal system. These proposed **City of Richmond park connections** include the designation of natural areas surrounding Gillies Creek Park as park land.

Private sector

Due to the populations and the expected growth in this region, the opportunities for public-private partnerships, as well as private investment in recreation, are numerous. The demand for access to resources and facilities is far greater than the present supply. The seven rivers in this region provide opportunity for water-based developments, access and services. Campgrounds, golf courses, tennis courts and swimming pools can be provided by the private sector. Private lands could provide open space and greenways through voluntary granting of open space and conservation easements, management agreements or other means to help meet the need for activities such as walking and bicycling.

Much of the demand for outdoor recreation is met by the private sector. For a discussion of the private sector, see Chapter IX-C: Resource Agencies. The following recommendations pertain to this region:

- Regional and local organizations should continue to support private facilities, such as campgrounds, resident summer camps for children, golf courses, tennis courts, swimming pools, marinas and indoor recreational facilities to help meet the needs identified in the 2006 Virginia Outdoors Survey.
- Cumberland Marsh Natural Area Preserve is located in New Kent County and is owned and managed by The Nature Conservancy. Facilities include a handicapped accessible boardwalk and observation platform with interpretive signs. This marsh supports perhaps the greatest biological diversity on the Pamunkey River. TNC should continue providing public access at this site.
- The private sector should evaluate opportunities to meet the need for all terrain vehicles (ATV) in the region.
- The Richmond region should be considered as a location for a gateway hostel convenient to mass transit and amenities of the urban core.
- Local governments and developers should give design consideration to the natural contours of the land when planning and constructing.



Over twenty miles of trails along the river combined with urban whitewater attracts international games, outdoor enthusiasts and tourists to the City of Richmond. Photo by Stuart Connack, Jr.



Outdoor activities along the region's beautiful rivers build leadership and foster team work and self esteem. Photo by Richmond Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities and Passages.

Table X-15. Region 15 (Richmond Regional Planning District) Existing and Projected Outdoor Recreation Needs

Activity	Activity Days	Demand	Units	Supply	2010 Needs	2020 Needs
Baseball	384,863	76	fields	73	3	27
Basketball	749,395	178	goals	67	111	166
Bicycling	938,195	67	miles	NI		
Mountain	120,833	9	miles	NI		
Other	817,363	58	miles	NI		
Lake, river and bay use (combined)	840,309	13,599	water acres	37,998	-24,399	-20,174
Power boating	339,842	8,191	water acres	S		
Sailing	52,283	452	water acres	S		
Saltwater fishing	317,186	1,784	water acres	S		
Jet ski, personal watercraft	59,545	933	water acres	S		
Water skiing, towed on water	71,454	2,239	water acres	S		
Camping	221,914	1,309	sites	6,265	-4,956	-4,550
Tent camping	141,746	836	sites	74	762	1,022
Developed camping	80,168	473	sites	6,191	-5,718	-5,571
Fitness trail use	585,573	47	mile trails	20	27	41
Fields (combined)	1,013,135	213	fields	123	90	156
Football	336,937	71	fields	112	-41	-19
Soccer	676,198	142	fields	11	131	175
Stream use (combined)	569,888	332	stream miles	236	96	199
Freshwater fishing	425,238	299	stream miles	S		
Human-powered boating	106,890	27	stream miles	S		
Rafting	11,038	2	stream miles	S		
Tubing	26,723	3	stream miles	S		
Golfing	640,471	22	courses	279	6	13
Hiking, backpacking	270,131	139	trail miles	92	47	90
Horseback riding	79,877	35	miles	18	17	27
In-line skating	222,204	16	miles	NI		
Jogging, running	3,703,403	297	mile trails	NI		
Nature study, programs	82,491	12	sites	3	9	12

Note: Demand multipliers used to create this chart are based on the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's 2006 *Virginia Outdoors Survey* as measured at the regional level. Additional analysis is required to adjust these results for local conditions.

NA: not applicable, no standard needed

S: same as combined

NS: not inventoried separately

NI: not inventoried

(-) indicates surplus

Table X-15. Region 15 (Richmond Regional Planning District) Existing and Projected Outdoor Recreation Needs – continued

Activity	Activity Days	Demand	Units	Supply	2010 Needs	2020 Needs
Picnicking away from home	376,150	977	tables	930	47	350
Skateboarding	214,362	66	sites	NI		
Snow skiing or snowboarding	109,214	3	ski lifts	-	3	4
Softball	435,695	78	fields	66	12	36
Sunbathing, relaxing on beach	1,071,808	77	beach acres	61	16	40
Swimming	2,904,630	187		NI		
Outdoor area	1,379,699	141	beach acres	61	80	124
Outdoor pools	909,149	38	pools	24	14	26
Indoor pools	615,782	7	pools	2	5	7
Tennis	374,116	234	courts	157	77	149
Used a playground	1,463,934	208	sites	94	114	179
Visiting gardens	196,063	22	sites	NI		
Visiting historic sites	658,770	56	sites	NI		
Visiting natural areas	512,377	87	sites	NI		
Volleyball	191,706	57	courts	9	48	65
Hunting	248,055	40,678	acres	108,599	-67,921	-55,283
Drive for pleasure	2,285,944	NA	NA	NI		
Driving motorcycle off road	39,213	18	miles	1	17	22
Driving 4-wheel-drive off road	105,729	NA	NA	NS		
Walking for pleasure	8,388,571	NA	NA	NI		
Bird watching	79,877	NA		NI		
Other	81,330	NA	NA	NI		

Note: Demand multipliers used to create this chart are based on the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's 2006 *Virginia Outdoors Survey* as measured at the regional level. Additional analysis is required to adjust these results for local conditions.

NA: not applicable, no standard needed

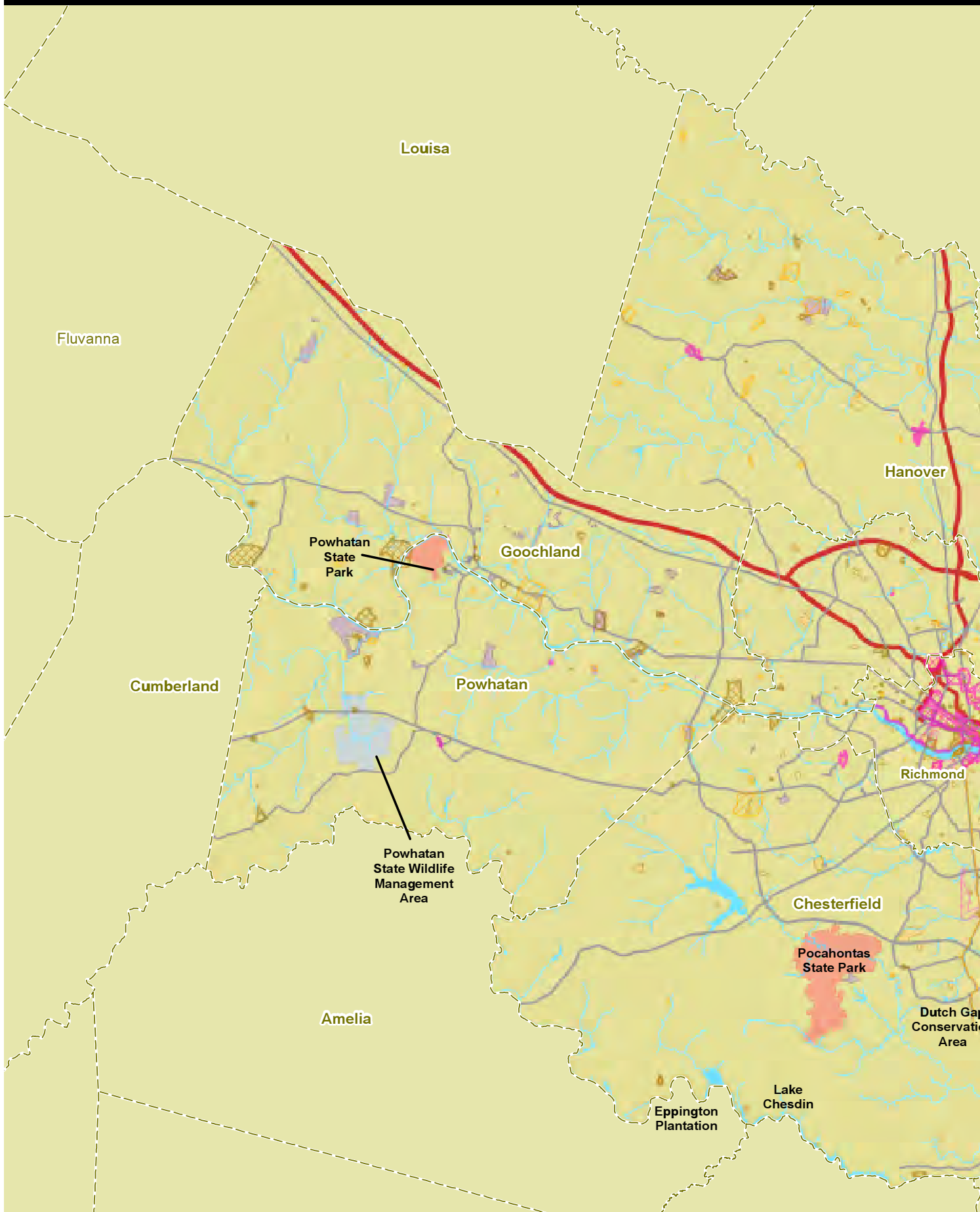
S: same as combined

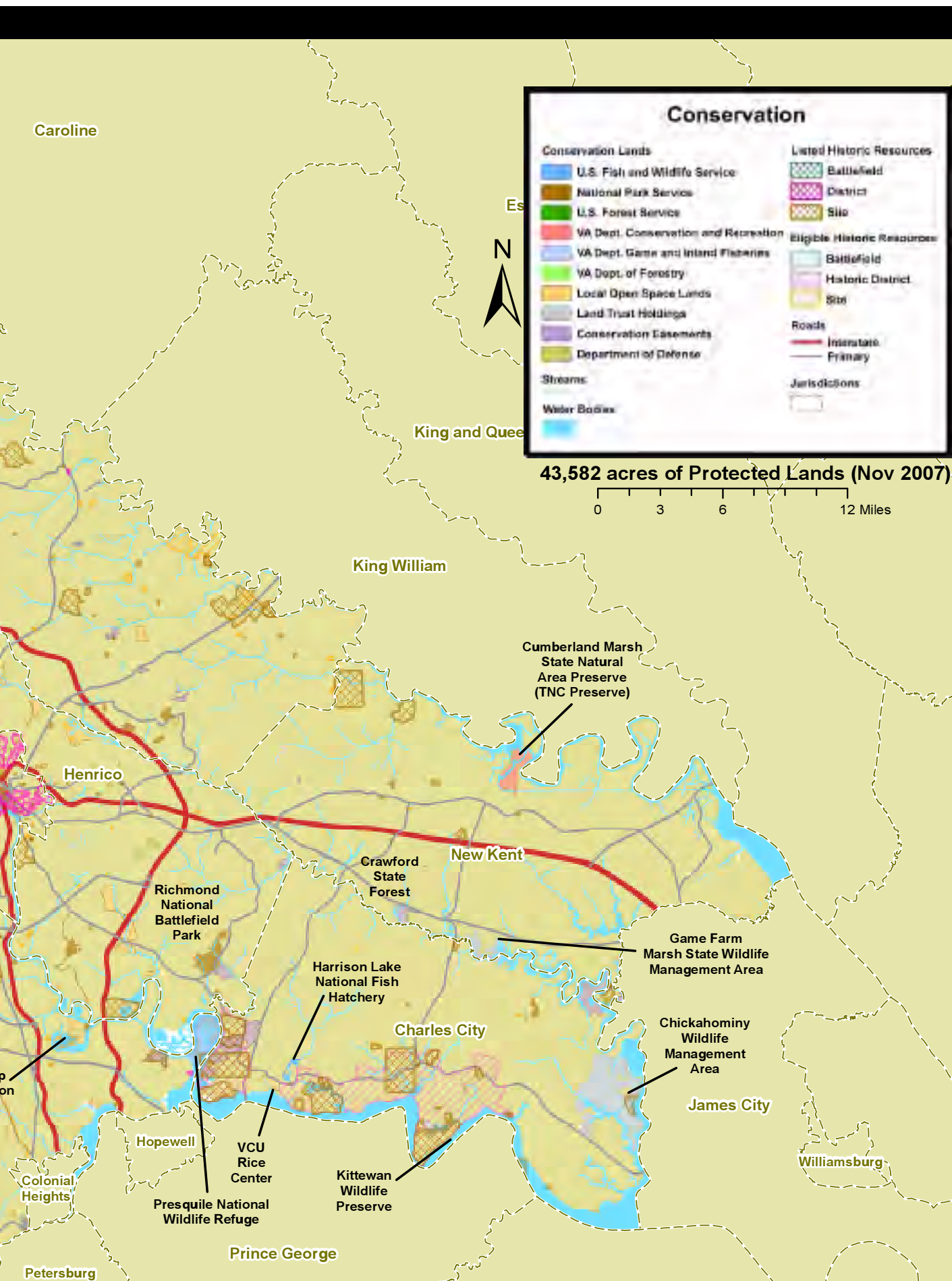
NS: not inventoried separately

NI: not inventoried

(-) indicates surplus

Map X-30. Region 15 (Richmond Regional Planning District) Conservation Lands





Map X-31. Region 15 (Richmond Regional Planning District) Outdoor Recreation

